## Mozambique and the West: The Search for Common Ground, 1975-1991

by Mario Azevedo

#### INTRODUCTION

During the 1980s, the situation in Mozambique received much greater attention from scholars, statesmen, and journalists both in Sub-Saharan Africa and abroad. The political orientation of the ruling party, the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), and its relations with the communist world became a thorny foreign policy issue in the United States, pitting members of Congress against the White House and the State Department, and prominent members of the Republican party against each other.

The following article analyzes the nature of the relations between the Western world, particularly the United States, and Mozambique during the postcolonial era, within the context of Southern Africa and the peculiar situation prevailing in the country. It argues that Mozambique's recent rapprochement with the West has been dictated by internal and external forces and is not therefore the result of a deliberate, rational and voluntary change of mind or ideology by the FRELIMO government. Internal factors have included severe periodic droughts and floods, the on-going civil strife, and unwise policies resulting in popular discontent, while external forces have comprised both subtle and obvious pressures from the United States and South Africa, the passive attitude of the Soviet Union, and, more recently, the collapse of the Eastern European bloc. The article further argues that the basis of US foreign policy toward Mozambique, particularly during the Reagan era, has been an attempt to contain the advance of communism in Southern Africa, although contrary to popular analysis. Mozambique has never been considered by the West to be as strategically important as, for example, Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. In spite of its proximity to South Africa and its geographical location as an outlet to the sea for its landlocked neighbors. Mozambique has remained a lower priority for the United States.<sup>1</sup> Finally, it is this writer's contention that the leaders of Mozambique, notwithstanding the economic and political changes forced upon them more recently, have not abandoned their Marxist-Leninist socialism. They remain convinced that only their ideology can solve the country's problems.

### **MOZAMBIQUE AND THE WEST, 1961-1975**

Until 1974, Mozambique, as a Portuguese colony, had its foreign policy posture identified with that of Portugal. Consequently, the West (the United States, Canada, and Western Europe) conducted all business that affected the Mozambican people through the Portuguese metropolis. As the liberation war erupted in 1964 under the auspices of the Mozambique Liberation Front (*Frente*  de Libertacao de Mocambique) — FRELIMO — the West, most of it supporting the colonial power, continued to insist that Portugal speak for its colonies. As a result, at the United Nations, due to the presence of the new Afro-Asiatic bloc during the 1960s, a heated debate for the recognition of self-determination for the Portuguese colonies ensued.

An encouraging move had improved Mozambique's chances in 1961. when the Kennedy Administration, ignoring the objections of Portugal, France, West Germany, and Britain, and reversing the Eisenhower policy, voted against Portugal, a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in defense of the eventual independence of Africans under Portuguese rule.<sup>2</sup> The vote, coming from a superpower that previously had opposed African independence in the Portuguese colonies, particularly if violence had to be used. galvanized momentarily nationalist leaders and heightened their hopes for an end to Portuguese colonialism. In fact, Kennedy went so far as to instruct the CIA to send arms and money to the Popular Union of Angola, the most important of the Angolan liberation movements at that time.<sup>3</sup> No sooner had the Kennedy administration taken this unprecedented step, however, than Congressional opposition and Portuguese threats to disallow American air bases at Azores forced the White House to reverse itself and even provide the Portuguese colonial state with clandestine assistance to stop colonial nationalism and independence.<sup>4</sup> As the Americans turned their attention to the Vietnam War, the Johnson Administration relegated the issue of Mozambique independence to the backburner. What would complicate future relations between Mozambique and the United States was the fact that the latter, from 1969 to 1974, maintained a policy of not having contact with FRELIMO (and other liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies).<sup>5</sup> Thus, Portugal continued to enjoy Congressional, military, and popular support in America as a defender of Western civilization in Africa and an ally who deserved unconditional support notwithstanding the arms embargo of 1961 imposed on the use of NATO weapons in the colonies. The rest of the Western world shared the same attitude, while the Eastern bloc, particularly the Soviet Union, escalated its military aid and humanitarian assistance to the liberation movements.

As Western Europe realized the grave situation for Portugal, France opened its weapons arsenal to the NATO ally, making available to the Portuguese, then waging war in three African colonies — Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau — Alouette helicopters and other types of lethal military hardware.<sup>6</sup> Britain, Portugal's oldest ally, followed the same policy as France, allowing the Portuguese regime to use NATO's weaponry in the colonial wars.

Although generally still sympathizing with the plight of the Portuguese, the United States government went through a period of vacillation regarding its policy toward the nationalist movements in the Portuguese colonies until the election of President Nixon. He appointed Henry Kissinger as his National Security Advisor and later his Secretary of State. A man who had only contempt for the Soviet Union and its satellites, Kissinger introduced to the White House and the State Department a foreign policy designed to strengthen Portugal and to eliminate Marxist movements in Southern Africa, including Mozambique whose most promising liberation movement — FRELIMO — had declared itself Marxist.

In National Security Study Memorandum 39, Kissinger argued that Southern Africa's white regimes would survive indefinitely, and that the liberation movements had little if any chance of altering the sub-continent's stability. Under such circumstances, therefore, he argued that the best foreign policy option for the United States would be to support the white regimes, while encouraging them to enact some reforms. The Portuguese colonies, particularly Mozambique, would serve in this case as a sort of joint *cordon sanitaire* that would ensure Western civilization's survival in Africa, while checking the advance of international communism.<sup>7</sup>

Kissinger's policy of containing the liberation movements would most likely have continued under the Ford Administration (in which Kissinger maintained his position as Secretary of State), had it not been for the Portuguese regime's unexpected collapse in April 1974 engineered by the Armed Forces Movement, which was tired of an archaic dictatorship at home and unending overseas wars. At the Lusaka negotiations, Portugal and FRELIMO set 25 June 1975, as the date for Mozambique's independence, which would be preceded by a nine-month transitional government. Consequently, America and her Western allies attempted to ascertain how Portugal would handle the Marxist regimes assuming power in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. Preoccupied with new problems at home, however, Portugal abandoned its former empire hurriedly, leaving Angola to the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), Mozambique to FRELIMO, and Guinea-Bissau, much more advanced in its liberation war, to the Partido Africano de Independencia de Guinea e Cabo Verde. As expected, the Western powers, including the United States, continued to feel that they should not interfere in someone else's former colony, particularly that of an ally, as Portugal happened to be.8

Eventually, however, the power vacuum left by the Portuguese departure from the colonies, especially in Angola and Mozambique, compelled the United States to step in to slow down or remove Soviet influence in the subcontinent. This unwarranted influence was reflected in Soviet military and technical assistance in the region, the presence of Cuban troops as protectors of the MPLA and as advisors to Mozambique. The United States refused to recognize the Angolan Marxist government but extended recognition to the FRELIMO government which, on the surface, contradicted the objectives of US foreign policy, as the following discussion attempts to demonstrate.<sup>9</sup>

#### **MOZAMBIQUE AND THE EASTERN BLOC, 1975-1982**

As a corollary to its long-standing relations with the communist world prior to independence, FRELIMO did not hesitate to show its gratitude and friendship with the Soviet Union and its allies who, at the exclusion of the United States, were invited to attend the independence celebrations. Although a more sympathetic view emerged later under the Carter Administration, the FRELIMO regime felt the United States had rebuffed them because of their Marxist-Leninist orientation. Consequently, Mozambique sought closer ties with the Eastern Bloc. Thus, between 1977 and 1982, FRELIMO, under President Samora Moises Machel, signed a series of agreements with the communist world which irritated the United States and some of its allies.

In March 1977, during Soviet President Podgorny's visit to Maputo, Mozambique and the Soviet Union signed a treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual aid, followed, in February 1978, by an agreement on technical and professional education which allowed several Mozambican students to pursue education in the Soviet Union. In the same year, Bulgaria signed an aid package for Mozambique for an irrigation project of some 30,000 to 40,000 hectares on the Limpopo River and the building of a dam at Mapai. A visit to Sofia by Marcelino dos Santos in May 1978 resulted in the creation of a joint commission for cooperation between Mozambique and Bulgaria, followed by four agreements on agriculture, prospecting, construction, and public health.<sup>10</sup> Bulgarian President Todor Zhivkov reciprocated the visit, and Mozambique and Bulgaria eventually signed a treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual aid.

As a means to further strengthen Mozambique's ties with the communist world, treaties with Cuba, North Korea, and Angola followed. Machel travelled to North Korea in May 1978, after visiting and signing a cooperation agreement with Hungary. Subsequently, in December 1978, Mozambique added to its friendship repertoire two more agreements with North Korea in the technical and economic fields, including fishing. Machel also visited China to patch up differences over the 1975-78 Angolan crisis. (While China had supported the FNLA, Mozambique had sided with the MPLA).<sup>11</sup> They signed a "cooperation protocol." In October 1978, Mozambique and Cuba concluded an economic, scientific, and technical cooperation agreement which permitted 1,000 Mozambique secondary school students to attend Cuban institutions. Six hundred Cuban technicians arrived in Mozambique that year.

As the issue of Rhodesia became a US concern, Kissinger visited Southern Africa in 1976 but, to underscore US displeasure over Mozambique's close ties with the Soviet Union and its allies, avoided stopping in Maputo. However, Mozambique's Foreign Minister Joaquim Chissano, flew to meet him in Dar-es-Salaam to see whether the US could assist Mozambique as it tried to enforce the United Nations' sanctions against Rhodesia. Kissinger, who wanted to ease Ian Smith out of office in support of majority rule, pledged assistance for black Rhodesian refugees in Mozambique and compensation for Mozambique's economic loss as a result of its border closure with the rebel British colony. Unfortunately, congressional opposition to any aid for Mozambique was so strong that the Ford Administration was able to provide only \$12.2 million during the first three-quarters of the 1976 fiscal year. Mozambique needed, instead, between \$139 million and \$165 million for 1976 alone.<sup>12</sup>

The arrival of Jimmy Carter's Administration and Andrew Young's subsequent appointment as Ambassador to the United Nations presaged a more amicable era between the United States and Mozambique. Even then, however, Carter's hands remained tied by the House of Representatives. Many in Congress were opposed to Mozambique's Marxist regime in principle, and to the measures it took against the white Rhodesian government by providing military bases to the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), and its support of the MPLA in Angola (thus diametrically opposing US assistance to the UNITA opposition). Sponsored by Philip Crane (R.-Illinois), a House amendment to the Foreign Assistance and Related Programs Appropriations Bill was approved in 1977; it barred the "use of any appropriated funds 'directly or indirectly' for Mozambique." Since the Senate did not go along with the amendment—which resulted in an impasse—Carter proposed the elimination of the clause prohibiting "indirect aid," while ensuring that the American government would "oppose or vote against" loans to Mozambique by international agencies.<sup>13</sup>

The House also rejected the proposed compromise, and the President was unable to provide meaningful assistance to Mozambique, which at that time was beginning to feel the economic impact of attacks by the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO). To plead its case, in October 1977, Mozambique sent a delegation to the United States, which resulted in the appropriation of \$8.7 million in humanitarian assistance for the former Portuguese colony. More aid followed at the end of the Carter Administration but it was always small and preceded by difficult negotiations with Congress. The situation for Mozambique was so difficult that the Carter Administration dared to request only \$500,000 for fiscal 1979.

Carter's defeat in the 1979 presidential elections brought Ronald Reagan to the White House — a hawkish president who was intent on arresting the advance of communism in Southern Africa. To complicate matters, Mozambique's conduct that year irritated Washington: it was among the only three African states that refused to endorse a UN resolution condemning the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Simultaneously, Mozambique, supported by East Germany and Bulgaria, had just requested admission in the East European bloc's Council for Mutual Economic Aid (COMECON). Although the Soviet Union denied the request — because of Mozambique's extreme poverty (which would drain COMECON resources) and its being only "Marxist-oriented" and not a true Marxist state such as Cuba and Vietnam<sup>14</sup> — the request did not go unnoticed in Washington. Many analysts expected, therefore, that Reagan's stand against communism and Marxist-Leninist socialism would reverse the friendly trend initiated during the Carter Administration.

Reagan's Southern Africa policy, whose architect was Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, was titled "constructive engagement." Called "reactionary pragmatism" by its critics, it was aimed at stopping the advance of communism worldwide and preventing Marxist governments from gaining a foothold in the African sub-continent. This was part of Reagan's anti-communist, global strategic initiative which viewed the world in terms of a competition between East and West, a struggle between capitalism and communism, out of which would result the defeat of the evil empire (the Soviet Union) by the forces of freedom (America). Ironically, however, Reagan did very little in concrete terms to change the policy of his predecessor toward the Maputo regime, being convinced that Mozambique, despite all its rhetoric, was not a threat. His major concern in Southern Africa became the expulsion of Cuban forces from Angola for which in 1986 he secured the repeal of the Clark Amendment (which had forbidden the use of US funds to fight the M.<sup>o</sup>LA) in order to resume military assistance to UNITA. In fact, the Reagan Administration was able to ease the 1970s restrictions on aid to Mozambique, although assistance to the embattled country was reduced to a minimum and continued to be earmarked only for humanitarian purposes to benefit refugees displaced as a result of the activities of RENAMO and those suffering from drought and floods in the country.

The tension between the US and Mozambique heightened in 1981, when the latter expelled from Maputo six American diplomats accused of being CIA operatives and of working with a group of Mozambicans to overthrow the regime. (The alleged Mozambican conspirators were tried in public and sentenced to prison terms.) After accusing the Soviet Union of instigating the incident, the Reagan Administration recalled its ambassador and suspended food aid in retaliation.<sup>15</sup> To show its contempt for the United States, Mozambique chose not to open an embassy in Washington until 1984.

Meanwhile, inside Mozambique, the security situation was deteriorating. RENAMO was crippling the infrastructure and development projects; people were fleeing from the countryside; deaths became a common occurrence; and the capital city was increasingly coming under guerrilla attack. Thus, by 1982, more than three million Mozambicans had been displaced by the war. South Africa was also threatening to carry out more incursions into Mozambican territory, as it had done in 1981. Port and railway revenues had decreased by more than 50 percent due to sabotage by RENAMO and South Africa's diversion of its cargo to its own ports and rails in retaliation against Mozambique's support of the African National Congress (ANC) and its role in the formation of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in 1980. The flow of mine workers from Mozambique to South Africa had been deliberately slowed by the South African government from 118,000 in 1975 to 45,000 by 1983.<sup>16</sup>

FRELIMO's internal policies were also in disarray. Incompetence, bureaucracy, the "dismal failure" of the state farms by 1982, as Allen Isaacman noted, the unwise decision to declare FRELIMO a "vanguard party" which reduced its membership to only 100,000 during the 1980s,<sup>17</sup> convinced the government that ideological purity alone would not save the country or the regime. Indeed, as Gillian Gunn points out, "Instead of developing ideology from experience, a process which at least ensured some link between policy and reality, FRELIMO had begun to impose ideology upon reality" in the aftermath of the III Party Congress in 1977.<sup>18</sup> By adopting a Russian–inspired Marxist model, "despite the fact that FRELIMO had fought a largely Maoist style war, with little support from the peasantry and the tiny, urban working class,"<sup>19</sup>

As mentioned above, Mozambique had turned to the East but, although military assistance, secured at heavy cost and in scarce hard currency, was trickling down to her armed forces only slowly, financial and humanitarian aid was not forthcoming from the communist bloc. Mozambique's leaders had finally realized that the socialist bloc was unable or unwilling to provide development assistance and stop South African military incursions into Mozambigue.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, in spite of an effort by Mozambigue to develop closer ties with the Soviet Union, Soviet purchases in Mozambique amounted to only 8 percent of all foreign purchases in the country, while those of Portugal and the US represented 15 percent and 23 percent respectively. The armored vehicles, helicopters, tanks, and SAM-missiles Mozambigue received from the Soviet Union were in general obsolete, despite the fact that the transfer of arms from the Eastern European bloc rose during the 1981-83 period from \$70 million to \$260 million.<sup>21</sup> With hindsight, one realizes now that the socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, were unable to provide the economic assistance Mozambique needed because of their own precarious economic conditions and the backwardness of their technological know-how. The Soviets' inability to fully assist Mozambique and its unwillingness to threaten or warn South Africa for its incursions into Mozambican territory and its support for RENAMO, forced FRELIMO to turn towards the West.

# PAINFUL RECONCILIATION WITH THE WEST: 1982 AND AFTER

Beginning in 1982, Mozambique was compelled by the impact of the civil war, South African incursions, natural disasters, and famine to adopt a more pragmatic foreign policy and opened itself to the West. Sensing that Mozambique would finally be taking a more reasonable approach to the West, Chester Crocker, during his visit to Southern Africa, flew to Maputo for a meeting with Machel in January 1983, where the President of Mozambique is said to have confided his personal worries to the American envoy. Shortly thereafter, the US Charge d'Affairs in Maputo joined representatives from Britain, France, China, and the Soviet Union in condemning, for the first time, South Africa's assistance to RENAMO.<sup>22</sup>

In Washington, the Reagan Administration issued a similar statement about RENAMO and South Africa. Subsequently, still in 1983, Machel travelled to Brussels, Lisbon, London, and Paris, attempting to secure financial and military assistance to save the country from total economic collapse, and to encourage capitalist investment in Mozambique. The results of the trip were mixed, as he received no firm commitments to save his regime. However, Maputo signed a \$60 million agreement with Shell and Esso to prospect for oil along the Mozambican coast.

Other moves toward the West followed: in September 1984, the socialist state signed the Lomé Convention (which makes the signatories associate members of the European Economic Community, entitling them to receive preferred financial assistance over non-signatories), and joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at the end of 1984, notwithstanding prior statements that it would never be blackmailed by this "imperialist" organization. At the United Nations, Mozambique tempered its support of the Soviet Union through absence or abstention from voting on issues pitting the Americans and their allies against the Soviets. To reward Mozambique's new attitude, the Reagan Administration returned its ambassador to Maputo and granted some \$8 million in food aid to the beleaguered country in 1984.<sup>23</sup>

In order to stabilize Southern Africa and to have more leverage, the United States had been working behind the scenes since early 1983 to bring Mozambique closer to South Africa by signing a non-aggression pact. This resulted in the 1984 Nkomati Accord, a bizarre coup de theatre, in Paul Moorcraft's opinion.<sup>24</sup> Chester Crocker, in his visit to Maputo in January 1983, hinted to FRELIMO that the US was prepared to pressure Pretoria to "cease destabilization" through RENAMO, and "convinced Machel this route was still worth exploring."<sup>25</sup> In November 1983, Crocker's Deputy for African Affairs, Frank Wisner, met Machel and subsequently South Africa's Foreign Minister Roelf (Pik) Botha in Pretoria, intimating to him that "the time was ripe for bilateral talks" with Mozambique. On 6 December 1983, Crocker himself met Botha in Rome, at which point Angola and Namibia were also overriding topics for the Reagan Administration. During the same year, the South African Foreign Minister visited Portugal twice, where he seems to have set the conditions for negotiations with Mozambique. Finally, the breakthrough came when American foreign policy makers convinced South African Chief of Police and former head of security, Johan Coetzee, that FRELIMO "would stick to an agreement to eject the ANC." Subsequently, he seems to have "swayed a skeptical P. W. Botha."26

Thus, on 16 March 1984, amidst pageantry and pomp, toasting and hand shaking, in the presence of more than 1,000 spectators, including British, Chinese, American, African, and other diplomats accredited to Maputo, Machel, dressed in his Field-Marshal's uniform, and P. W. Botha, signed the Nkomati Accord on the banks of the Nkomati River. The Accord was viewed in South Africa as having "paved the way for Western aid to Mozambique backed by South African guarantees."<sup>27</sup> Immediately thereafter, Mozambique ordered the ANC to leave "its soil" or be confined to a refugee camp, while being allowed to maintain only a small diplomatic mission in Maputo.<sup>28</sup> South Africa, however, which pledged not to support RENAMO, never complied with the Accord.

In spite of its subsequent failure, the signing of the Nkomati Accord constituted, at that time, a much needed victory for the Reagan Administration's "constructive engagement" policy, not only in Mozambique but in the whole of Southern Africa. As a result, one senior US official in the State Department boasted that "We are the only mediator who talks to everyone."<sup>29</sup> The Reagan Administration hailed Machel as a "man of peace" and praised South Africa's policy of moderation, most likely with an eye to the Cuban and Namibian issue. Margaret Thatcher hoped that "the agreement would bring mutual benefits to the peoples of both countries," while Chancellor Helmut Kohl predicted the Accord would constitute "a solid basis for good relations between the states concerned."<sup>30</sup> In general, African capitals remained silent. President Kenneth Kaunda, for example, while understanding Mozambique's situation, hoped that

no other frontline state would follow in Mozambique footsteps.<sup>31</sup> (It was discovered later that Swaziland had secretly signed a similar pact.)

Immediately thereafter, Washington lifted the ban on bilateral nonemergency aid to Mozambique. Some observers note that Washington was delighted to see some harassment of RENAMO operatives in South Africa, and that Crocker even hinted that South Africa ought to provide military aid to FRELIMO, making, as one analyst put it, the South African Defense Force his "Cubans." South Africa rejected the plea on account of the US arms embargo on the apartheid regime, but eventually agreed to provide \$8 million in vehicles and radio equipment to FRELIMO.<sup>32</sup> In fact, if it were not for Congress, the Reagan Administration, under pressure from the State Department, would have sent military assistance to FRELIMO.

Encouraged by the positive signs, Mozambique continued its opening to the West: in 1985, President Reagan received Machel in the White House at the urging of Vice-President George Bush, a moderate Republican in the Administration, against the objections of CIA director William Casey.<sup>33</sup> Machel's death in an airplane crash in October 1986 (which FRELIMO blamed on South Africa)<sup>34</sup> did not slow down but accelerated Mozambique's rapprochement with the West. Much needed food donations and humanitarian assistance were now being provided on a regular basis by Congress and the President. Mozambioue received some \$85 million during the 1983-87 period.<sup>35</sup> Joaquim Chissano, the new Mozambican President, made sure that one of his first foreign visits would be to the United States in 1987. Hunger had increased in the country; the UN estimated that between 1987 and 1988, Mozambique would need at least 421,000 tons of grain to feed its dislocated people. Congress, however, estimated that Mozambique needed 750,000 tons of food in 1988, compared to 240,000 tons for Angola, 570,000 for Sudan, and 1,300,000 tons for Ethiopia.<sup>36</sup> Foreign debt had risen from US \$585 million in 1982 to \$1.2 billion by 1986.

However, the issue of RENAMO continued to divide the Reagan Administration. Reagan's personal instinct was to support the guerrilla movement as it claimed to be fighting against communism and trying to introduce democracy, a free market economy, and a multi-party system to Mozambique. Moreover, RENAMO had influential supporters, both inside and outside the Administration. During this period, conservative influences facilitated a visit to the White House by three RENAMO members, who met with the President's Director of Communications, Patrick J. Buchanan; at the same time, a RENAMO videotape was presented to National Security Advisor Frank Carlucci.<sup>37</sup> Several prominent Republicans, such as Senators Jesse Helms and Robert Dole (the Republican leader in the Senate) opposed a more moderate Administration policy on Mozambique, as advocated by the State Department. For example, since fiscal year 1985, Helms has succeeded in amending the appropriations bill to forbid any type of military training program for Mozambique. In fiscal year 1986, he unsuccessfully tried to tie any assistance for Mozambique to a reduction of foreign military personnel to 55 and to a "commitment" to democracy on FRELIMO's part. In addition, for eleven months in 1986-87, Helms and 28 other Senators blocked the appointment of Melissa Wells as Ambassador because they claimed she was already predisposed to defend the Maputo regime at all costs, which they felt would not serve US interests in the region; she was finally confirmed in September 1987.<sup>38</sup>

The conservatives enjoyed support from the Defense Department as well, which pointed out that RENAMO was militarily more advanced than UNITA and that, since Mozambique was weaker than Angola (defended by Cubans and Soviets), it would be more realistic to assist the Mozambican rebels. They also noted that Mozambique does not respect human rights: that it has killed political opponents and innocent civilians chasing after RENAMO insurgents, has tortured people, arrested citizens without due process, detaining them as long as 84 days, and has prevented free speech and a free press.<sup>39</sup> Informed sources claimed that the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) have supported RENAMO and would like to see the Marxist regime go. In fact, the CIA is said to have once assisted RENAMO, including in the setting up of its radio station in South Africa, and that in 1981 it provided South Africa with "strategic information" for its strike on Maputo.<sup>40</sup>

Conservative influence, particularly from the Heritage Foundation, Free the Eagle, and the Conservative Action Foundation, facilitated the opening of a RENAMO office in Washington, directed by Tom Schaff, in 1986. Conservatives have argued that, as long as the same leadership continues to control Mozambique, the apparent shift away from a Marxist-Leninist orientation will simply be talk. They opposed the Nkomati Accord, and continued to point out that the presence of 1,000 Soviet advisors, 800 North Koreans, 600 East Germans, and 1,200 Cuban troops specializing in "counter-insurgency warfare" underscores the fact that Mozambique is playing a double-game.<sup>41</sup> Thus, in the House, Congressmen such as Danny Burton (Rep.- Indiana) attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to introduce bills to assist RENAMO.<sup>42</sup>

The liberals, on the other hand, supported by the State Department, argued that Mozambique was pursuing a true non-aligned policy and that supporting RENAMO would be a setback for US policy in Southern Africa, as it would be strongly opposed by the frontline states.<sup>43</sup> The State Department, under politically moderate George Schultz, contained many FRELIMO supporters, including Chester Crocker. Crocker argued that the Marxist regime in Mozambique was better than any that might follow, should RENAMO succeed. The Department saw Machel, particulary after the Nkomati Accord, as the "voice of moderation" who should be encouraged through financial and technical assistance to move away from the Soviet Union. RENAMO, in its view, was not respected internationally and had no program for a future Mozambique.<sup>44</sup> As a means to buttress its argument, the State Department commissioned a study which, when completed in April 1988, was known as the Robert Gersony Report. Gersony, after interviewing refugees in the surrounding areas and some Mozambicans inside the country, accused RENAMO of having killed some 100,000 people since 1987 and of using "captive labor, rape, mutilation, and even arbitrary execution."45 These arguments seem to have convinced Reagan that, unlike Angola, FRELIMO did not threaten US interests in the region, and that subtle pressure and financial aid would soften the doctrinaire Marxists and bring them closer to the West.

In spite of the fact that Vice-President Bush apparently had sided with the hard-liners, he had also prevailed upon Reagan to meet with Machel in 1985. Once he became president, he attempted to please and appease both the hawks and doves on the issue of Mozambique and RENAMO. Thus, following the policy of the State Department, President Bush insisted on providing Mozambique with financial and technical assistance to change its Marxist orientation, while at the same time urging FRELIMO leaders to respond positively to RENAMO's demands for democracy and a free market economy. He favored and encouraged the 1990 talks in Rome between the two rivals, initiated in 1988 in Kenya under the auspices of Presidents Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Daniel arap Moi of Kenya.

Although relations between the United States and Mozambique remained difficult, the West in general had maintained a cool but not an antagonistic posture toward Maputo's new government. Sweden, Norway, France, Italy, Canada, the Netherlands, and West Germany, retained their embassies in Maputo and continued to have friendly contact with the Marxist-Leninist government. The Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands), in particular, which had assisted FRELIMO during the liberation phase, accelerated their assistance to the new government in many areas. Nordic idealists joined other *cooperantes* (expatriate voluntary sympathizers) of the new government in several capacities to create a new society. In fact, Mozambique relied on many of them to fill the gap the Portuguese had left in business, education, health, agriculture, and technical needs.<sup>46</sup> Other Western nations usually provided humanitarian assistance when they were approached by FRELIMO leaders. West Germany, however, showed some reservations when Mozambique, supported by Italy and Holland, expressed interest in receiving aid through the EEC but refused to sign the "West Berlin Clause" (which recognized the rights of West Germany over West Berlin) and the Lomé Convention. However, in 1982 and 1984 respectively, Mozambique finally signed both. The signing of the "West Berlin Clause" upset East Germany but "opened the way for increased economic ties to both the Bonn government and West German capital and removed an important barrier to closer relations" between EEC countries and Mozambique. As a result, relations between the two countries turned out to be cordial to the extent that, in May 1989, West Germany forgave a DM150 million debt Mozambique had contracted during the previous six months.<sup>47</sup> The Bonn government has not, however, presented obstacles to RENAMO diplomatic activities in West Germany. In fact, RENAMO leaders' first major meeting abroad took place in West Germany in 1986.

Spain has provided scientific and technical assistance to Mozambique, particularly in forestry and fishing. Italy, a NATO and EEC member (which Machel visited in 1981), pledged some \$68 million for oil exploration through the Italian company ENI, and has taken steps to develop a coal terminal at Beira port and to purchase 700,000 tons of coal annually (beginning in 1986). Since by law Italy cannot supply military assistance to Mozambique, she has nevertheless provided non-lethal military assistance to Mozambique troops fighting RENAMO. Consequently, coal exports to Italy and RENAMO. Consequently, coal exports to Italy and Italian assistance to Mozambique have made the two countries important partners.<sup>48</sup>

Mozambique has also benefitted indirectly from the West through the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Economic Community. However, most assistance has been in the form of food and not military aid, while some has gone to development projects. On development, for example, the Beira railway (Beira Corridor) received a pledge of \$280 million from the Scandinavian countries, the EEC, the African Development Bank (ADB), and the World Bank in 1986. Some 610 million *ecus* for health, transportation, agriculture, and important materials were also provided to Mozambique by these Western countries and organizations that year.<sup>49</sup>

On humanitarian assistance, just to cite a few instances, the EEC in 1989 provided 80,000 tons of cereal, 5,000 tons of vegetables, and 2,000 tons of olive oil for people affected by the war in Mozambique. The United Nations Donors Conference of April 1989, of which most Western European nations are members, pledged \$352 million (the largest pledge since 1981) in emergency funds to assist Mozambique's war victims. (Earlier, in 1985, members had pledged \$47 million, a major increase from the pledge of \$16 million in 1984.) For its part, since 1987, the IMF has funded an Economic Recovery Program in Mozambique (\$80.9 million for 1987-89 and \$50.1 million in 1989 for a threeyear structural adjustment).<sup>50</sup> The government of Mozambique has claimed that the program has made progress in the country, as the GDP seems to have risen to 4 percent. The program's true impact, however, particularly in rural Mozambique, is still uncertain.

US aid to Mozambique in 1989 amounted to \$100 million, and then increased to \$110 million in 1990, with an additional \$10 million designed to purchase railway locomotives. The US Agency for International Development provided 30,000 tons of food aid worth \$7.5 million for "commercial distribution," in addition to 65,000 tons of maize as emergency relief, 6,000 tons of beans and lentils, and the 2,000 tons of vegetable oil made available a few months earlier. Italy provided \$2.9 million for environmental protection, while Norway made available \$30 million for sea transport, power, fisheries and oil prospecting, during May of 1990. From July to September 1990, Mozambique continued to benefit from Western generosity: \$39 million from France for communications, drinking water, and taxis in Maputo; 6 million ecus from the European Investment Bank (EIB) under the Lomé Convention for capital investment and medium size enterprises; a cancellation of a 333 million FF debt and the rescheduling of the payments of 667 million FF by France. In 1990, France provided another \$19 million loan, through the Central Fund for Economic Cooperation. This financed the construction (by two French firms — Telespace and Socacom) of satellite earth stations in five Mozambique cities.<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, France has consistently maintained friendly relations with Mozambique, although most of her assistance has been financial and humanitarian. As long as Mozambique refused to sign the Lomé Convention, however, as Claude Cheysson, the EEC Commissioner for Development Aid, warned Mozambique authorities in 1980, France was not willing to allow a higher level of assistance either unilaterally or as an EEC member. The signing of the Lomé Convention by Mozambique in 1984 signified a willingness to cooperate more closely with the West. Consequently, in 1988, France began the training of FRELIMO troops to protect development projects such as the work underway to improve the Nacala railway linking Malawi and Mozambique. In fact, France and Portugal have invested some \$200 million in the project.<sup>52</sup>

France provided further assistance for construction of satellite communication stations (102 million FF in July-September 1990), 1.6 FF million for meteorological satellite links between Maputo and Reunion, 78 million FF for electricity in Maputo, and 100 million FF to assist with the structural adjustment program. West and East Germany loaned Mozambique DM 38 million worth of technical assistance.<sup>53</sup> Among the Western countries, Canada, a generous contributor to these international agencies, decided in 1988 to provide nonlethal military assistance to Mozambique in the form of uniforms, tents, generators, and boots, while in 1989, she initiated a \$9.17 million project with Mozambique, earmarked for water development projects in rural areas affected by the drought. Norway and its non-governmental organizations joined by Sweden have decided lately to add to their long-standing humanitarian, economic, and technical assistance non-lethal military aid that might assist Mozambique troops in fighting RENAMO.

British citizens have had a long history of investment in the former Portuguese colony, while the Lonrho Company has been involved in industry, energy, agriculture, banking, tourism and mining. Consequently, even after independence from Portugal, Mozambique retained many of the trade links it had with Britain during the Portuguese colonial period. However, the British government, for a long time after independence, in tandem with the United States, maintained a reserved attitude toward the Mozambique Marxist regime. Since 1980, however, following the Lancaster House Agreement that led Rhodesia-Zimbabwe to independence, relations between the two have improved considerably. (Machel had exerted pressure on Robert Mugabe to accept the terms of the Agreement.) At this point, Britain provided a ground-to-air communication system for use against RENAMO's activities.<sup>54</sup> Chissano visited the Foreign Office in 1981; Machel himself followed with a visit to Margaret Thatcher in 1983.

As a result of the contacts, England pledged some military assistance including the sending of a British Military Assistance Training Team (BMATT), the training of Mozambican soldiers in the United Kingdom, and support for the Nyanga Military Camp in Zimbabwe, where a six-week counter-insurgency training program for at least 260 Mozambicans troops a year was initiated after 1987. Margaret Thatcher visited Nyanga Camp in 1988 and pledged more help, while encouraging dialogue between FRELIMO and RENAMO to settle their armed conflict. Britain has also allowed private organizations to "send exmilitary personnel, effectively mercenaries, to Mozambique to assist in training the security forces involved in protecting the Nacala and Limpopo transport corridors."<sup>55</sup>

It must be pointed out also that, since 1980, much West European aid to

Mozambique has gone through the SADCC, particularly toward the development of the transportation and communication network, on which several frontline states (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland) depend as an outlet to the sea. Of the \$800 million pledged by the Donors Conference in Maputo in 1980, for example, \$650 million went to Mozambique for its transportation infrastructure.<sup>56</sup> As the SADCC continues to receive more funds, therefore, Mozambique will be, among the ten frontline states, a major beneficiary in economic development and normalized diplomatic relations with the West.

The case of Portugal, the former colonial power, deserves special attention. Despite ambassadorial exchanges following independence in 1975. relations between the two countries have been strained. Mozambique's Marxist ideology, on the one hand, stood as a stumbling block with Portuguese rightists who became government members in the early days following the 1974 coup. Some of them had heard the accounts of the retornados (expatriate returnees) of their treatment in the hands of FRELIMO, the nationalization of their property, and the constant arrests, imprisonment, and expulsion of Portuguese citizens residing in the former colony. On the other hand, until 1986, Portugal was more interested in being accepted as an EEC member than in assisting its former colony, which continued to use inflammatory rhetoric against the Lisbon government. Furthermore, Mozambique accused Portugal of harboring RENAMO members and of conspiring to overthrow its revolutionary government. However, Mozambique could not ignore the fact that Portugal knew Mozambique well, could provide military assistance, if it so decided, and influence not only the Portuguese community in South Africa and Portugal which supported RENAMO, but also Portuguese businessmen. such as industrialist magnate Manuel Bulhosa.57

Tension between Portugal and Mozambique subsided somewhat following the visit of President Ramalho Eanes to Maputo in 1981, who, in an elaborate ceremony of reconciliation, bestowed upon Machel the sword of a Portuguese general.<sup>58</sup> In 1982, a high-level Portuguese military mission arrived in Maputo, and subsequently Portugal pledged to provide military assistance (training and war materiel) to Mozambique. Putting aside the fate of thousands of Portuguese citizens then living in South Africa, the Portuguese and Mozambique governments condemned apartheid and its regime for assisting RENAMO. The bilateral atmosphere was further improved when Machel visited Portugal in 1983. As a result, Prime Minister Pinto Balsemao, during his visit to Maputo that year, brought with him several businessmen to further normalize the two countries' economic relations.

As the atmosphere improved, hundreds of Portuguese who had left Mozambique during and immediately after the war of independence, began resettling in the former colony, as FRELIMO promised the return of some of their property and better treatment. However, the continued presence of RENAMO members in Portugal, the arrest and expulsion in 1983 of several Portuguese diplomats and citizens subsequently accused of collaborating with RENAMO, have had a chilling effect on the relations of the two nations. In 1989, for example, Portugal expelled Rafael Custodio Marques, the third Secretary of the Mozambican Embassy in Lisbon. Marques was accused of having paid an agent, Alexandre Chagas, 400 pounds sterling to assassinate Evo Fernandes, a prominent RENAMO leader, in early 1988. On this issue, Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva used the strongest diplomatic language against the Mozambican government when he declared: "We will never tolerate the practice of criminal acts in this country by any foreign citizen, even under cover of diplomatic immunity."<sup>59</sup> Mozambique, in retaliation, expelled a Portuguese diplomat from Maputo. It appears, therefore, that until and unless the military conflict in the former Portuguese colony is resolved, the two will continue to maintain rocky reciprocal relations.

#### CONCLUSION

The end of the war of liberation and the independence of Mozambique under a Marxist-Leninist government caught every Western nation by surprise. The United States and Western Europe hoped that Portugal would influence the political course of its former colony to make it easier for all of them to recognize the new state and cooperate with it. As Portugal attempted to come to grips with its domestic problems, the colonies were no longer a pressing matter, and therefore a power vacuum ensued in Mozambique. The situation having turned out that way, Western Europe expected the United States to provide the leadership.

Unfortunately, the United States government was more preoccupied with those areas in Southern Africa where the Soviet Union seemed to have made major military and ideological gains — in Angola where Cuban troops were stationed, and in Namibia where the South-West African People's Organization was active. Mozambique, whose natural resources could not match those of Angola (where the Gulf Oil Company's operation provided huge revenues to the Marxist MPLA government) played "second fiddle" to US Southern African policy. In fact, the often emphasized strategic importance of Mozambique on the Indian Ocean was never a major factor in the minds of US foreign policy makers. In general, the former Portuguese colony was rarely seen on its own merits but was always subordinated to the interests of the rest of the Southern African region.

It is understandable, therefore, that very few Western European countries were interested in intervening on the side of FRELIMO or RENAMO, as the war escalated in the country almost immediately after independence. Because FRELIMO provided bases to ZANU and the ANC and castigated the West for its "imperialism and neo-colonialism" in the world, Mozambique's cries for economic assistance were only partially successful in Europe and America. Only when the ravages of the war finally became intolerable internationally, did the major Western powers provide low levels of assistance during this period, but not the kind that would weaken or strengthen either of the warring parties.

The United States saw no compelling reason to intervene directly on either side, as some of its policy makers believed that RENAMO provided leverage to force the Marxist leaders to change their political orientation. By refusing to consider military assistance but dispensing humanitarian aid, the United States was hoping that the FRELIMO government would change its Marxist-Leninist philosophy and provide, along with Angola, stability in Southern Africa.<sup>60</sup>

The Nordic countries, however, have been an exception. They assisted FRELIMO in non-military matters throughout the liberation war and never considered stopping assistance after independence. Some political experts have explained the behavior of the Nordic countries as the result of their small geographical sizes which tend to make them more accessible and appealing to the newly independent states, of which Mozambique is only one example.<sup>61</sup> They are also more developed than the Eastern European bloc on which the leaders of Southern Africa's liberation movements have relied for military support. Likewise, since most of them are socialist in economic orientation, they have felt an affinity with countries such as Mozambique, despite the fact that the "revolutionary" leaders of the latter might advocate a Marxist-Leninist brand of socialism.

One must point out that the recent collapse of Eastern Europe has made improvement of Mozambique's relations with the West more pressing. The destructive weight of RENAMO, the natural disasters (droughts and floods) the country has suffered since independence, and the inadequate economic support from the Eastern bloc on which Mozambique wished to rely primarily, coupled with incompetence, mismanagement, corruption, and the imposition of an economic and a political system the people never quite understood or accepted, forced the country's leaders to reexamine their philosophy and its implementation. Under political and economic duress these inexperienced leaders had only one resource left: approaching the West to salvage Mozambique. Mozambique's final acceptance of the IMF austerity and orientation program as well as most of the tangible political and economic changes that have taken place in the country, particularly during the last five years, attest to the West's victory over the unrealistically defiant stance and rhetoric of FRELIMO leaders. It is certainly revealing that, during its fifth Congress in Maputo, 24-31 July 1989, FRELIMO allowed the removal of the expression "Marxist-Leninist" from its brand of socialism.

On the other hand, however, the fact that some of the Western allies, such as Portugal, Britain, and France, all NATO members, were willing to assist Mozambique militarily, although in a very modest way, confirms the changing realities of the decade of the 1980s and Western governments' fear that, if nothing was done, moderate leaders could fall and might perhaps be replaced by a government that is inimical if not more antagonistic to the West than the present regime. This type of behavior by the Western world was intended to force FRELIMO to negotiate but not to fall. In fact, this study shows that the most significant Western aid to Mozambique occurred during the latter part of the 1980s, when FRELIMO was, at least verbally, distancing itself from the Eastern bloc. It is this element of "real politics" that accounts for the apparently ambiguous American policy toward Mozambique. From 1976 to 1990, in spite of the uneasy circumstances dictating relations between the two countries, the US remained the largest single contributor in response to Mozambique's request for humanitarian assistance. In particular, the period after 1987 witnessed a tremendous increase in American aid to Mozambique, some \$200 million from fiscal years 1987 to 1989, clearly reflecting a significant improvement in bilateral relations. The fact that this occurred during a period when both the Reagan and Bush administrations were adhering to Congressional guidelines (that stipulated that no foreign aid funds be provided to Mozambique unless the Administration could certify that it was "in the national interest" to do so) illustrates clearly the ambiguous nature of US policy on Mozambique.<sup>62</sup>

The Bush Administration has encouraged a peaceful solution and democratic and economic reforms that might bring about a Mozambican government that is closely allied to the United States rather than to the Soviet Union. On 26 January 1990, the Administration took Mozambique off the list of Marxist-Leninist countries banned from receiving assistance from the US Export-Import Bank; Mozambique had been on the list since 23 October 1986. The US was pleased when FRELIMO announced on 30 November 1990 that it would adopt a new constitution allowing a multi-party state and that negotiations with RENAMO would continue in Rome. To conform to US demands, FRELIMO also promised "an independent judiciary, press freedoms, and the right to strike."<sup>63</sup>

Finally, it must be said that, by contrast, in Angola, where the threat of communism is stronger in the eyes of the Bush Administration and the economic stakes are higher, the US has not hesitated to pursue a more aggressive policy against the ruling party, the MPLA.<sup>64</sup> In fact, political insiders believe that the Bush Administration would not want to see the Mozambican conflict resolved before the disposition of the Angolan crisis for fear that the settlement might set unacceptable precedents. Political analysts say, in fact, that Washington had told FRELIMO that acceptance of a multi-party system in the country and the recognition of the RENAMO as a party, as the latter has insisted, should not constitute, insofar as the United States is concerned, conditions for peace talks.

Looking back with the benefit of hindsight, one realizes that the Soviet Union's impact on Mozambique and Southern Africa seems to have been erroneously magnified by the United States. The Soviets provided practically no meaningful assistance to Mozambique except military hardware at high cost and some technical advice. For its part, Mozambique grew impatient with this situation, and its disappointment explains in part why FRELIMO leaders never allowed that superpower to establish military bases in the country. One would therefore tend to agree with Peter Calvocoressi's remark that in Africa

Moscow's position is essentially negative. In African eyes the Soviet Union's virtue is that it is a card to play against the United States . . . Soviet aid to liberation movements has been only enough to keep the pot boiling; in the Rhodesian conflict Moscow chose the wrong pot. The Soviet Union shows no inclination to challenge the regional predominance of South Africa.<sup>65</sup>

In fact, as Richard Bloomfield argues, the core Reagan "globalists" who saw the world as divided into communist and capitalist camps lost to the "regionalists" represented by the position of the State Department, which maintained that "U.S. interests in Mozambique are largely regional, rather than global."<sup>66</sup>

Finally, it must be said, FRELIMO understands the meaning of power, and, as Colin Legum puts it, "though regularly castigated as the bulwark of the White regimes in Southern Africa, the major Western powers were seen by FRELIMO as a vital ingredient in the process that would essentially bring a transfer to a Black majority rule in Zimbabwe<sup>367</sup> and other parts of Southern Africa and reduce South Africa's hegemony in the region before it changes its regime.

Meanwhile, in the United States, the State Department continues to believe that FRELIMO's leaders are indeed abandoning their Marxist-Leninist ideology. However, when one examines, in particular, the statements of Chissano, who is more moderate and perhaps even more intelligent than his predecessor Machel, it is clear that FRELIMO has not abandoned its philosophy. Chissano and FRELIMO's Politburo members have never repudiated socialism. In 1986, for example, Chissano noted that "although Mozambique is negotiating with the IMF and other financial organizations, this does not mean that its relinquishing its principles. Socialism is the path to development ... is the fruit for all of our combined experience."<sup>68</sup> Gillian Gunn, although observing that FRELIMO"... is open to change its approach to suit new conditions," concludes in her analysis that, "this is not simply that President Chissano has abandoned the socialist dream. It simply means that he has realized that his dream is not attainable in the near or even medium term."69 Furthermore, in 1990, the Mozambique Prime Minister, underscoring the country's reliance on its old allies, feared that the Soviet Union might reduce its assistance to Mozambique by \$200 million (which could have a "dramatic" impact on the country's economy),<sup>70</sup> but neither he nor any others in government have repudiated or criticized Moscow.

Unfortunately, the military situation in Mozambique has not changed drastically in favor of FRELIMO. In fact, *The Washington Post* notes that, recently, RENAMO has relied more and more on captured weapons from FRELIMO rather than on South African assistance. From January 1989 to February 1990, for example, it attacked the Beira oil pipeline thirty-five times, causing the spill of close to two million litres of gas, and attacked Zimbabwe thirty-three times. Thus, it seems true that, "with no decisive military solution in sight, Chissano and FRELIMO were forced to seek a negotiated end to the protracted warfare through promises of economic and political reforms,"<sup>71</sup> hurriedly announced at the end of 1990.

In this whole military and diplomatic ordeal, Mozambique has become the poorest country in Southern Africa, with one of the continent's highest international debts, estimated at \$4.7 billion in 1989, representing 472.2 percent of the GNP. Its GNP per capita has been reduced to \$65, the lowest in Africa, making the country the world's greatest beggar of humanitarian assistance at present.<sup>72</sup>

Consequently, the changes that have taken place in Mozambique have been forced ones, and it is conceivable that FRELIMO would go back to its Marxist-Leninist policies if it no longer needed assistance from the West or if it could repel RENAMO once and for all. This assessment also applies to the political reforms promised for 1991.<sup>73</sup> But, pressure from the US, continued successes by RENAMO even in 1989 and 1990,<sup>74</sup> and the collapse of the socialist governments in Eastern Europe — have all tied the hands of the regime in Mozambique.

#### Endnotes

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